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Kawabe et al.

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(54) **AIR FILTER ASSEMBLY**

46/2411; B01D 46/2414; B01D 2271/027;
B01D 46/0049

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See application file for complete search history.

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(56)

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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Primary Examiner — Robert Clemente

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Merchant & Gould PC

(60) Provisional application No. 61/553,407, filed on Oct. 31, 2011, provisional application No. 61/636,187, filed on Apr. 20, 2012, provisional application No. 61/707,164, filed on Sep. 28, 2012.

(57)

ABSTRACT

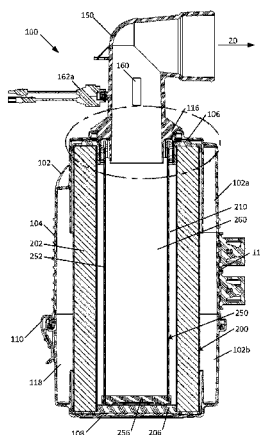
An air filter assembly having a primary filter element, a secondary filter element, and a housing with an outlet tube is disclosed. The primary filter element is operably installed within the housing and has an interior volume. The secondary filter element is operably installed within the primary filter element interior volume and has an interior volume defined by a first wall extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap. The open end cap of the secondary filter element defines a sealing structure having a first portion extending into the secondary filter interior volume. The outlet tube is operably connected to the housing air outlet opening and includes an inset collar being at least partially disposed within the secondary filter interior volume and extending over at least a part of the sealing structure first portion.

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B01D 46/00 (2006.01)
(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
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(Continued)

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CPC B01D 46/0024; B01D 46/0026; B01D

19 Claims, 16 Drawing Sheets



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B01D 46/42 (2006.01)
B01D 46/44 (2006.01)
- (52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *B01D 46/44* (2013.01); *B01D 2271/027* (2013.01)
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FIG. 1

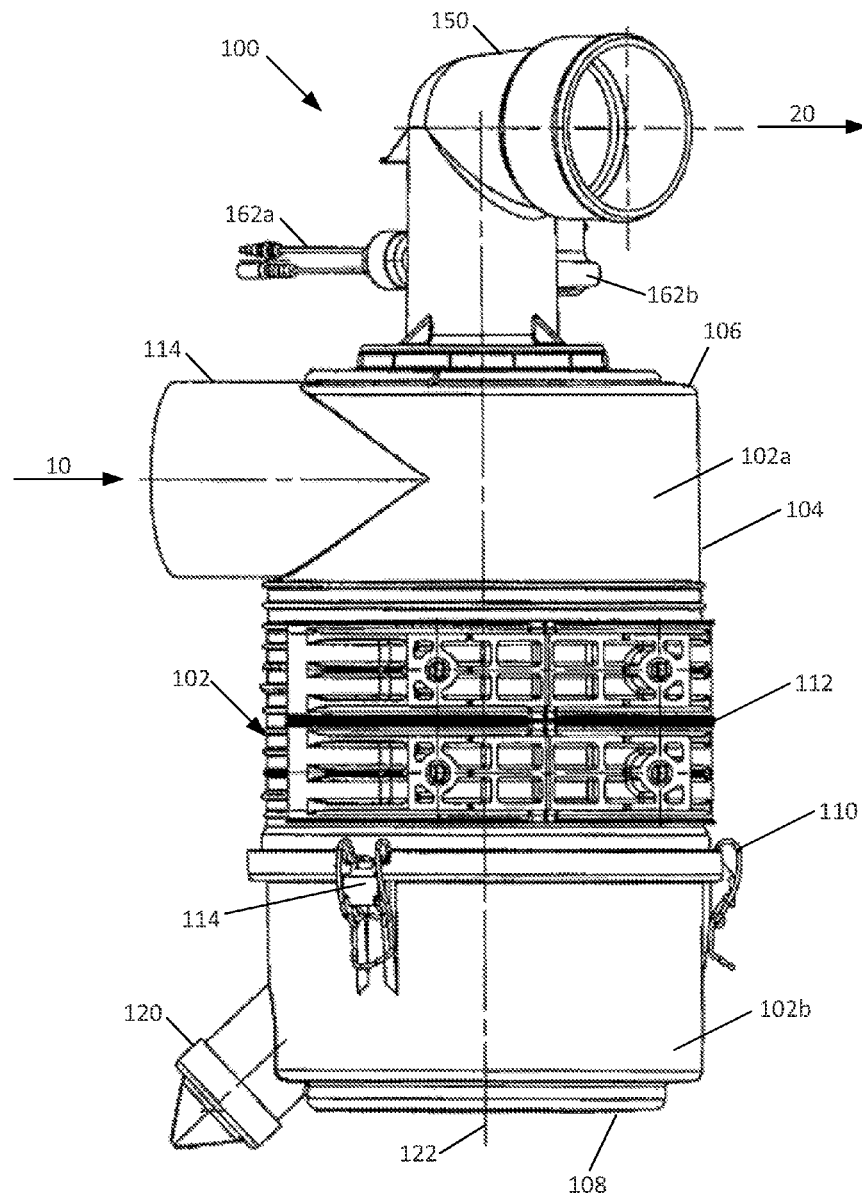


FIG. 2

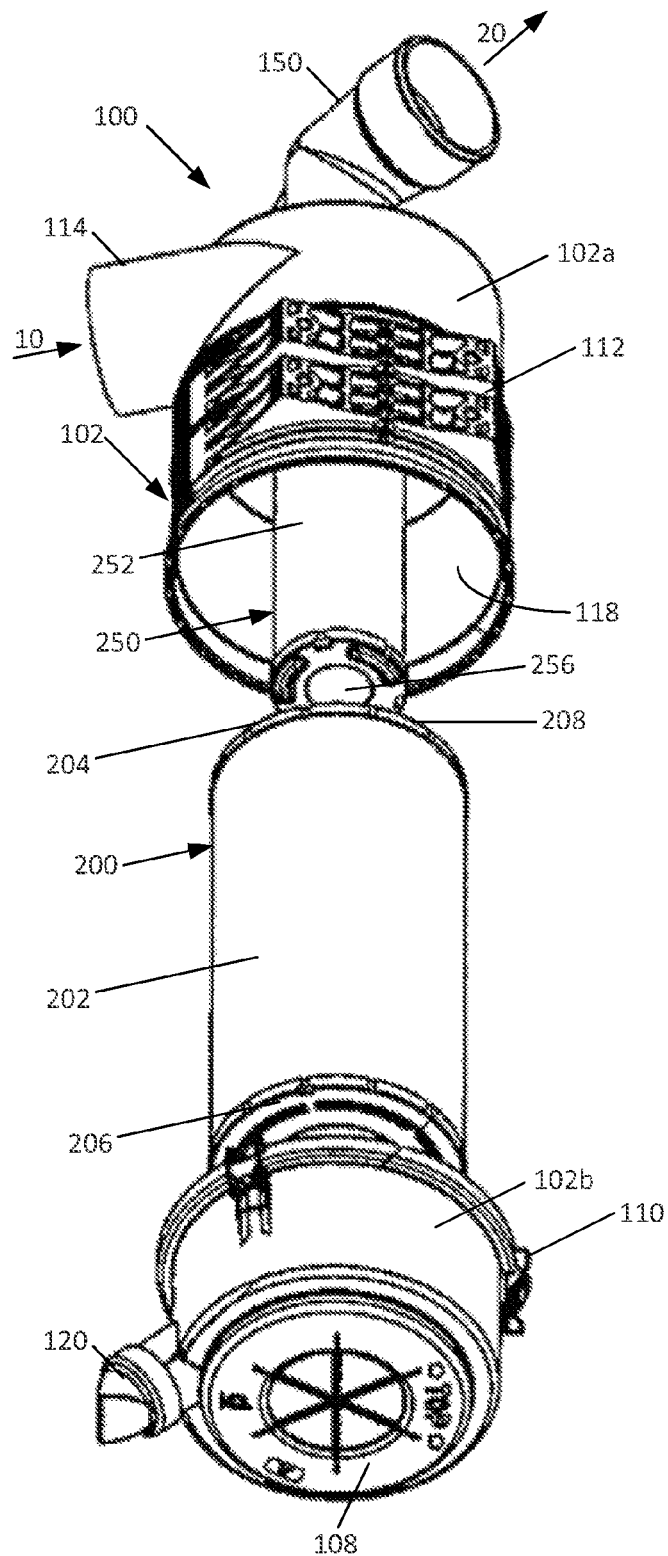


FIG. 3

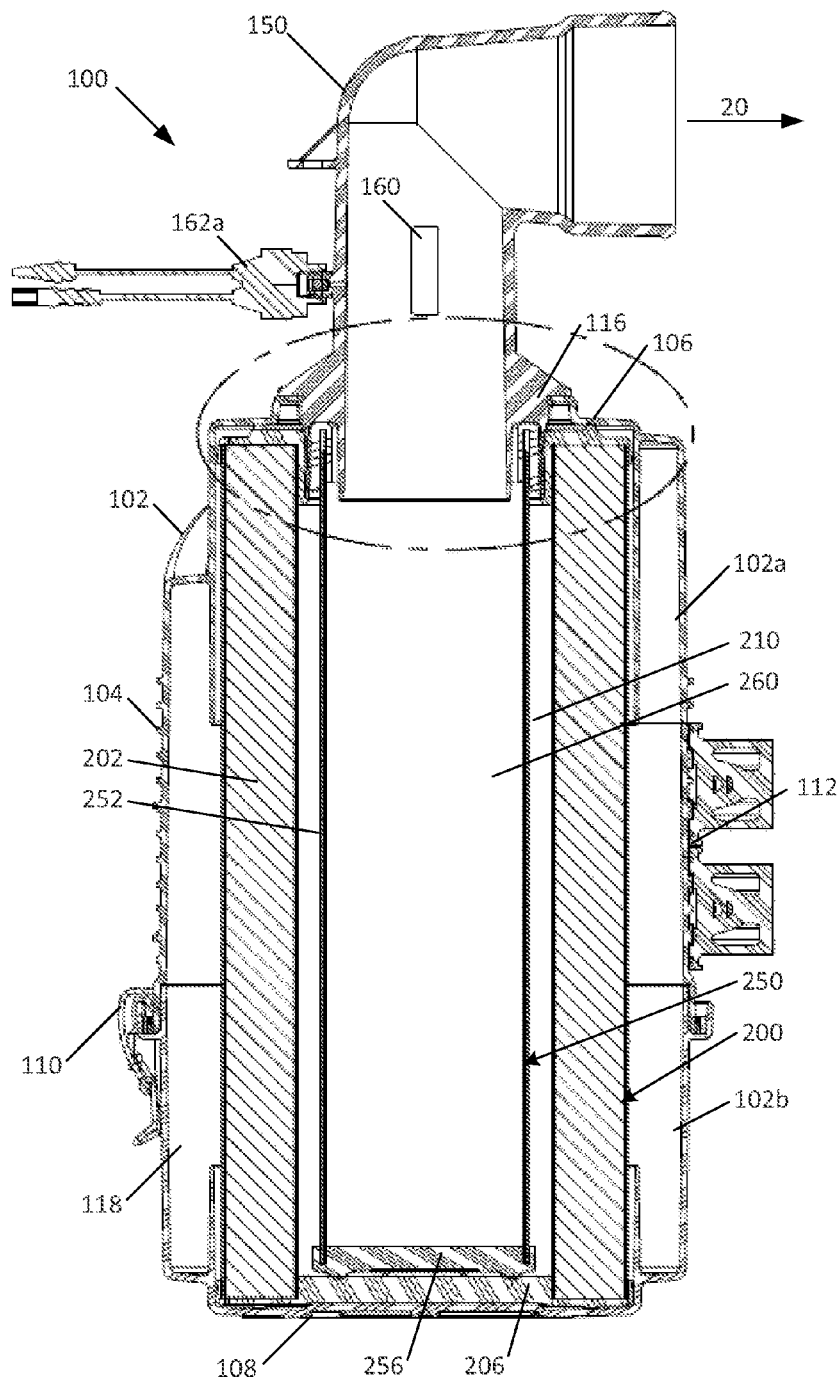


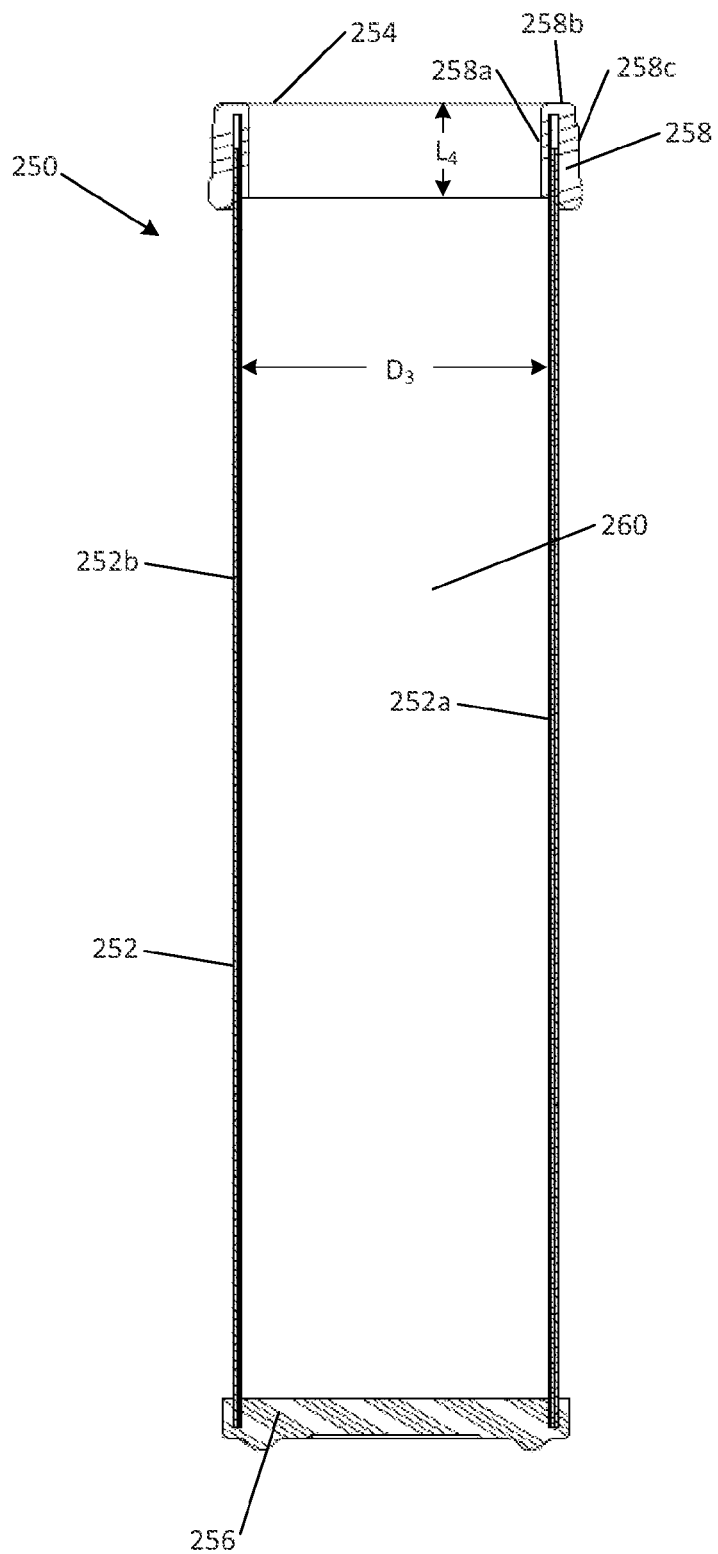
FIG. 4

FIG. 5

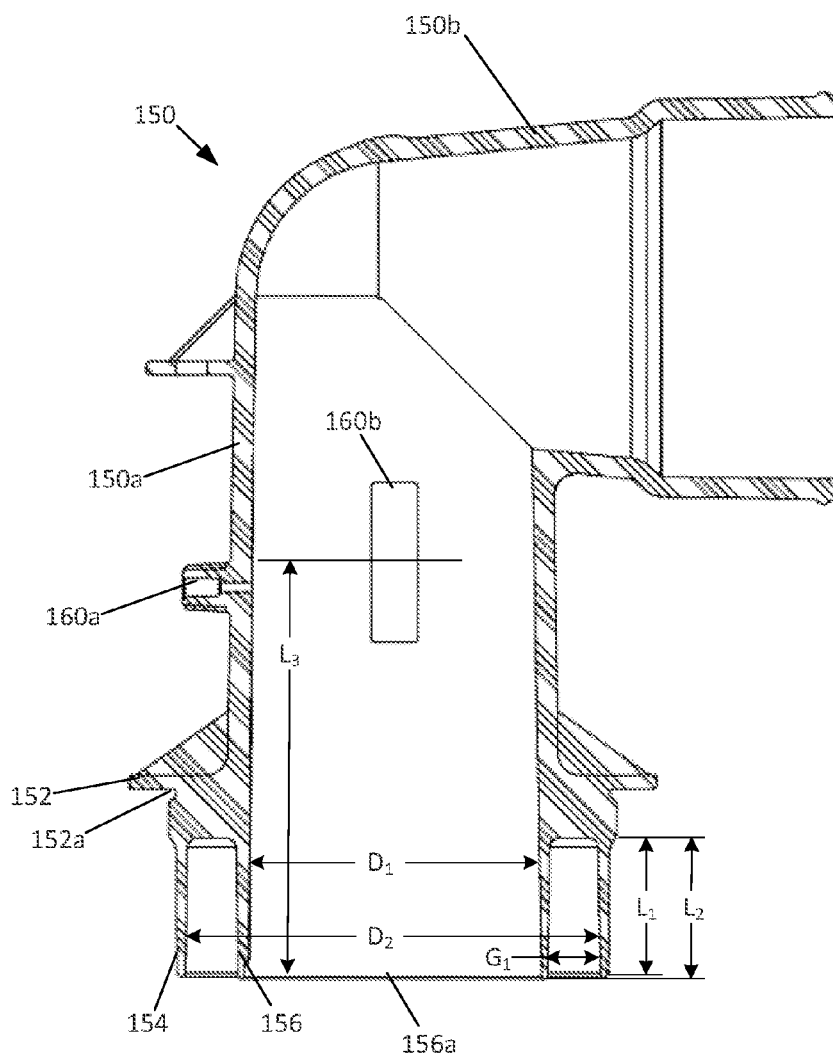


FIG. 6

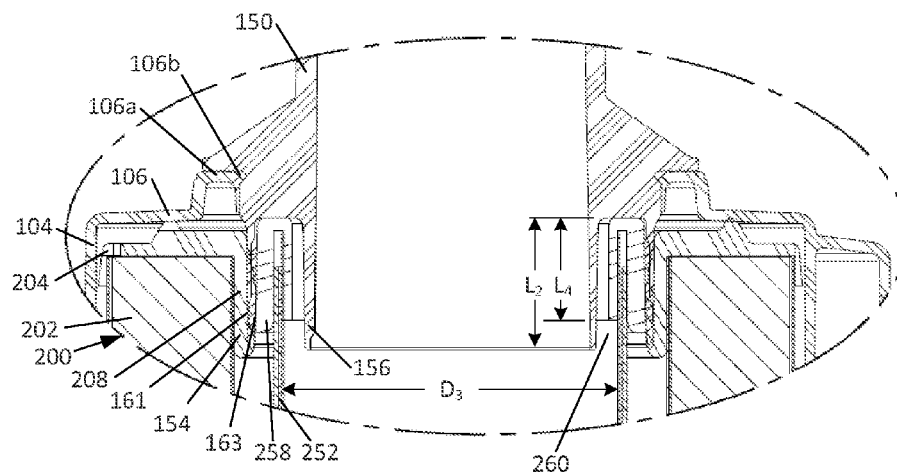


FIG. 7

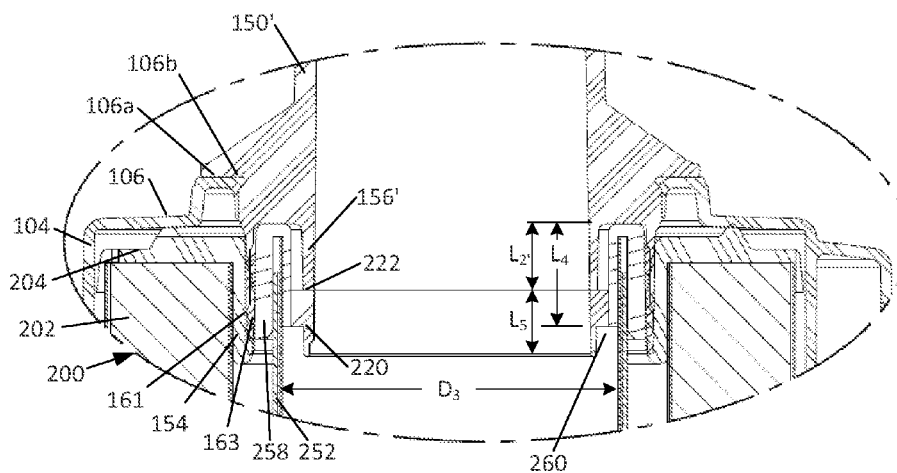


FIG. 8

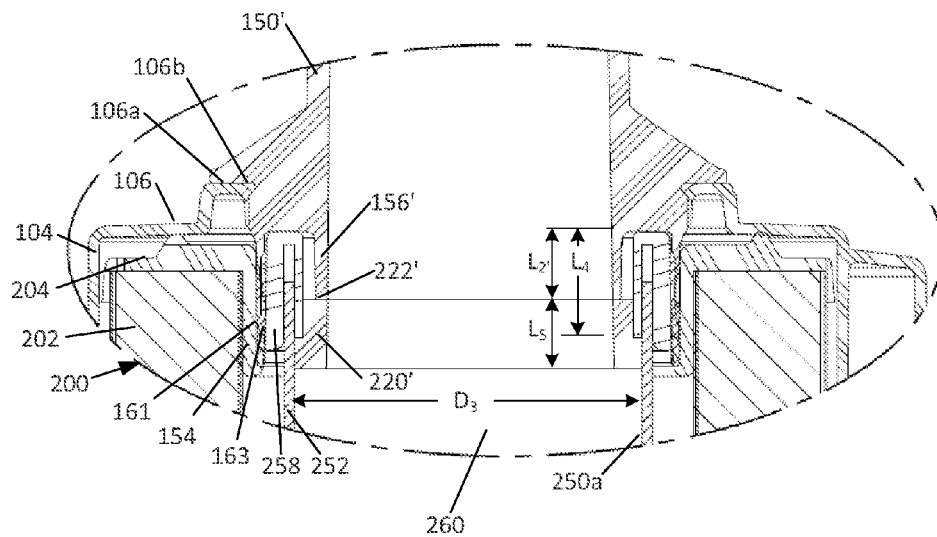


FIG. 9

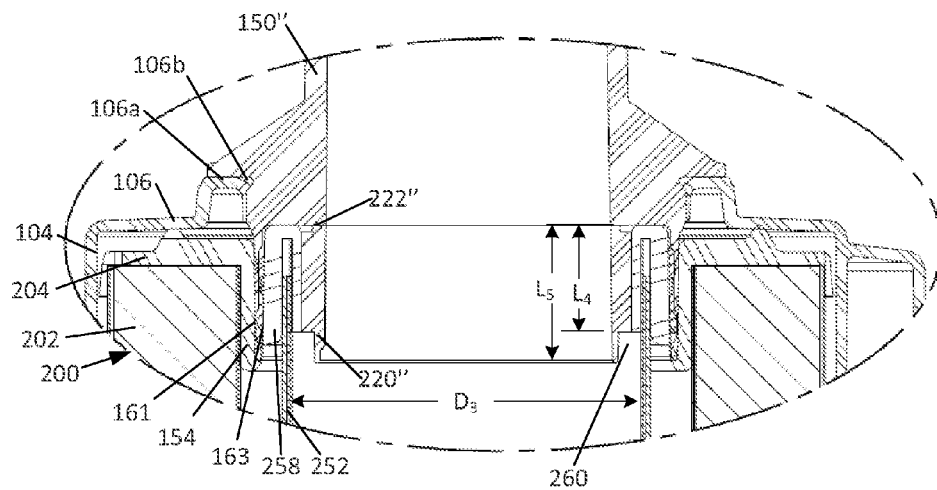


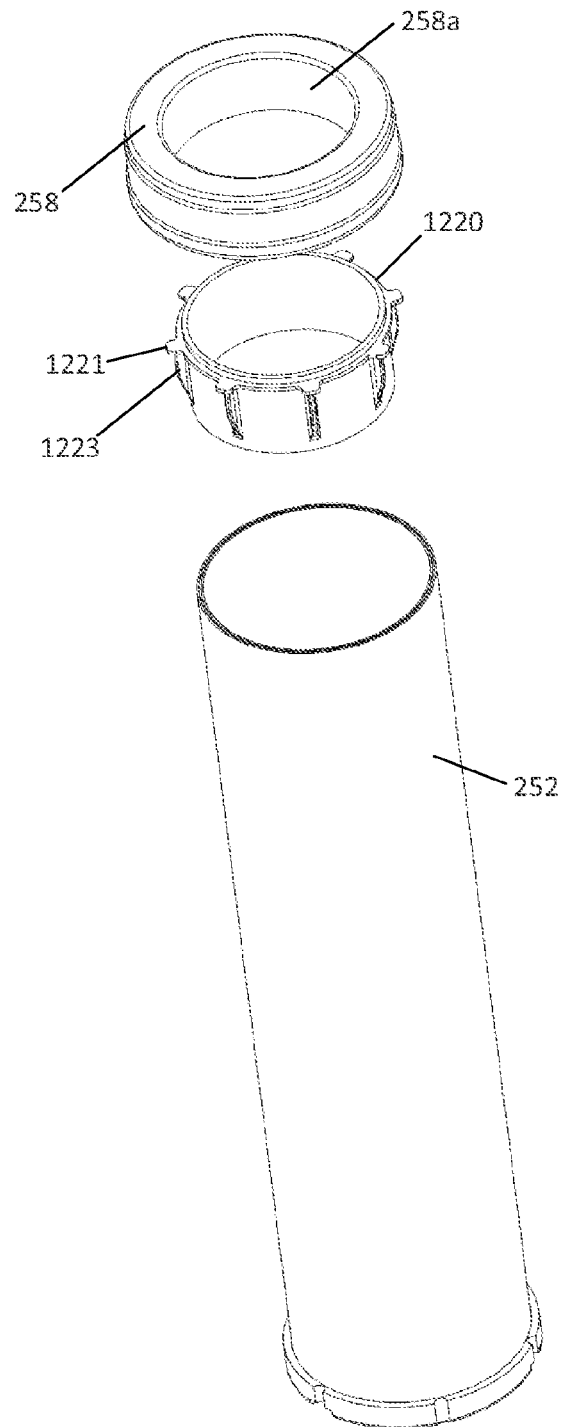
FIG. 10

FIG. 11

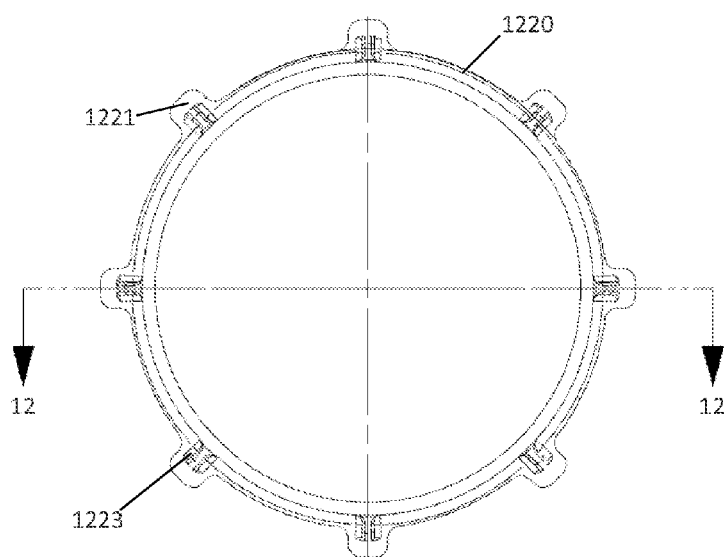


FIG. 12

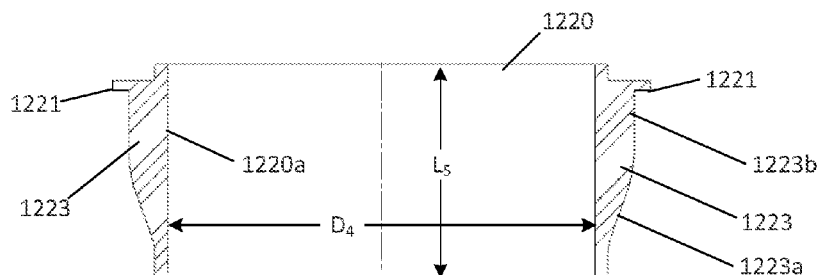


FIG. 13

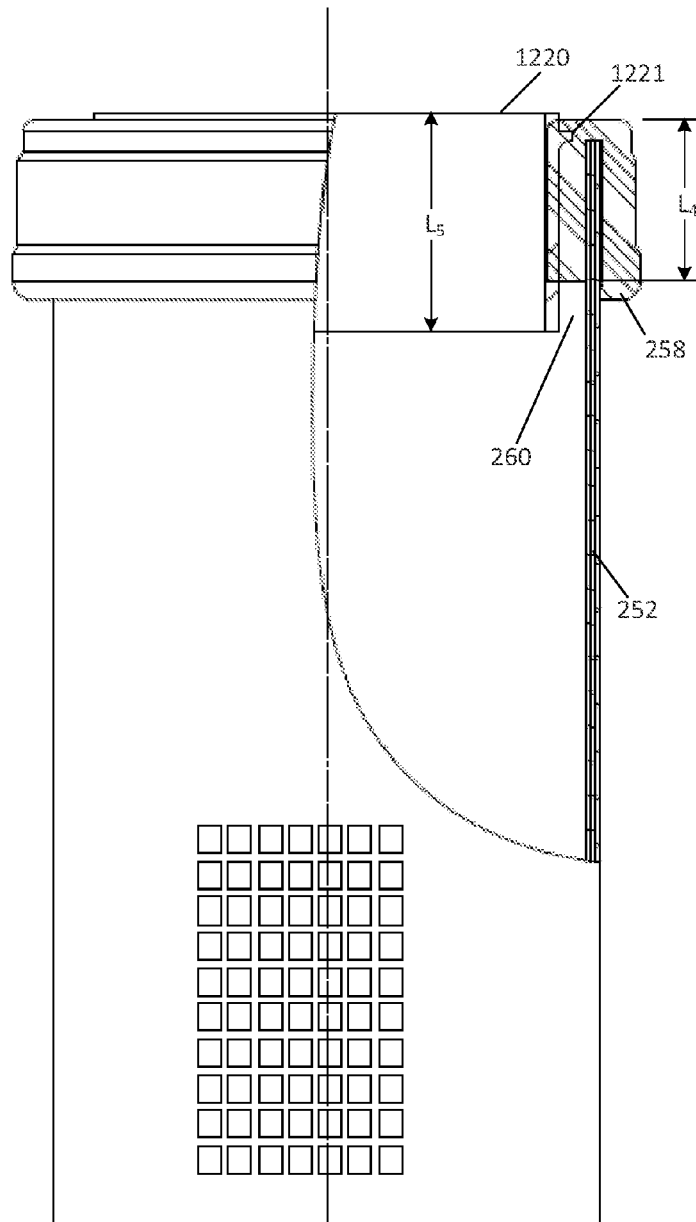


FIG. 14

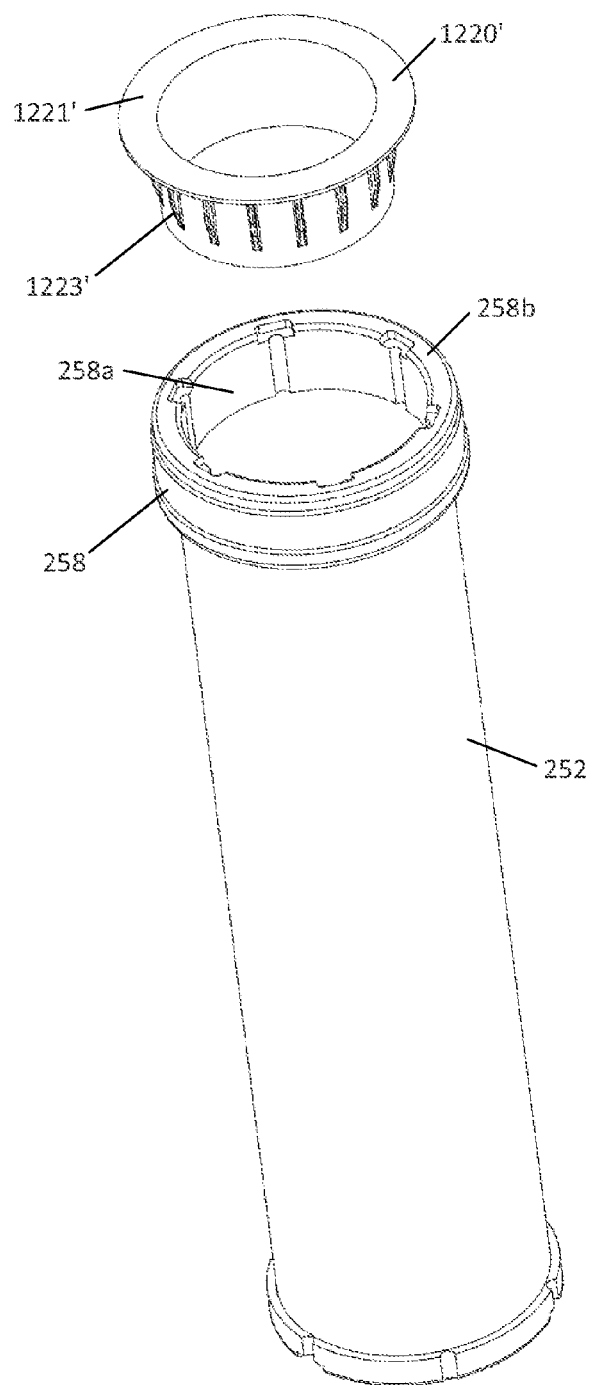


FIG. 15

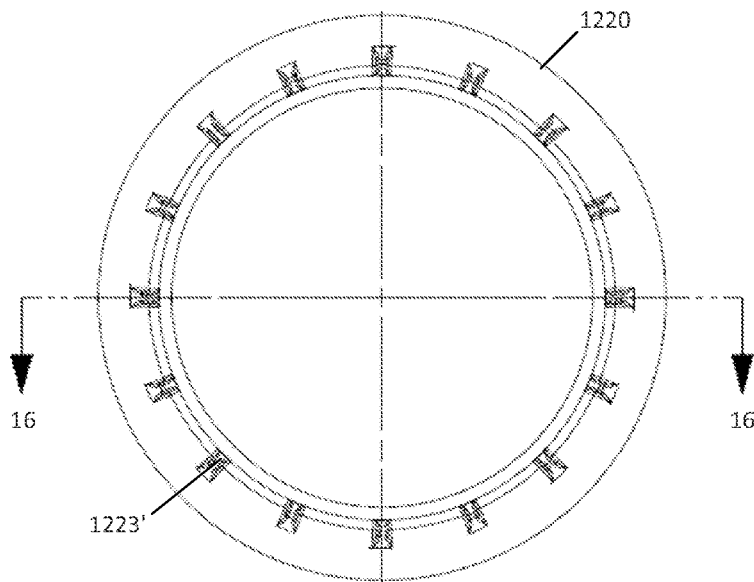


FIG. 16

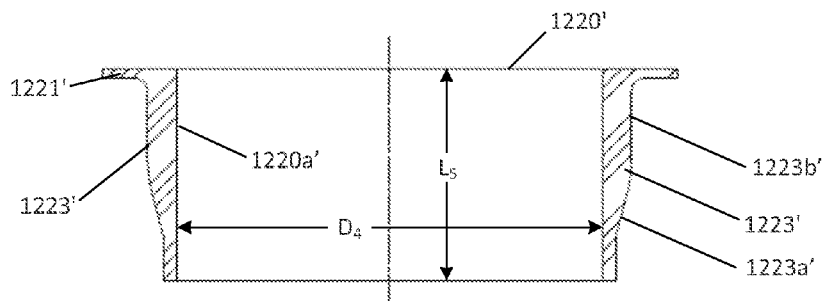


FIG. 17

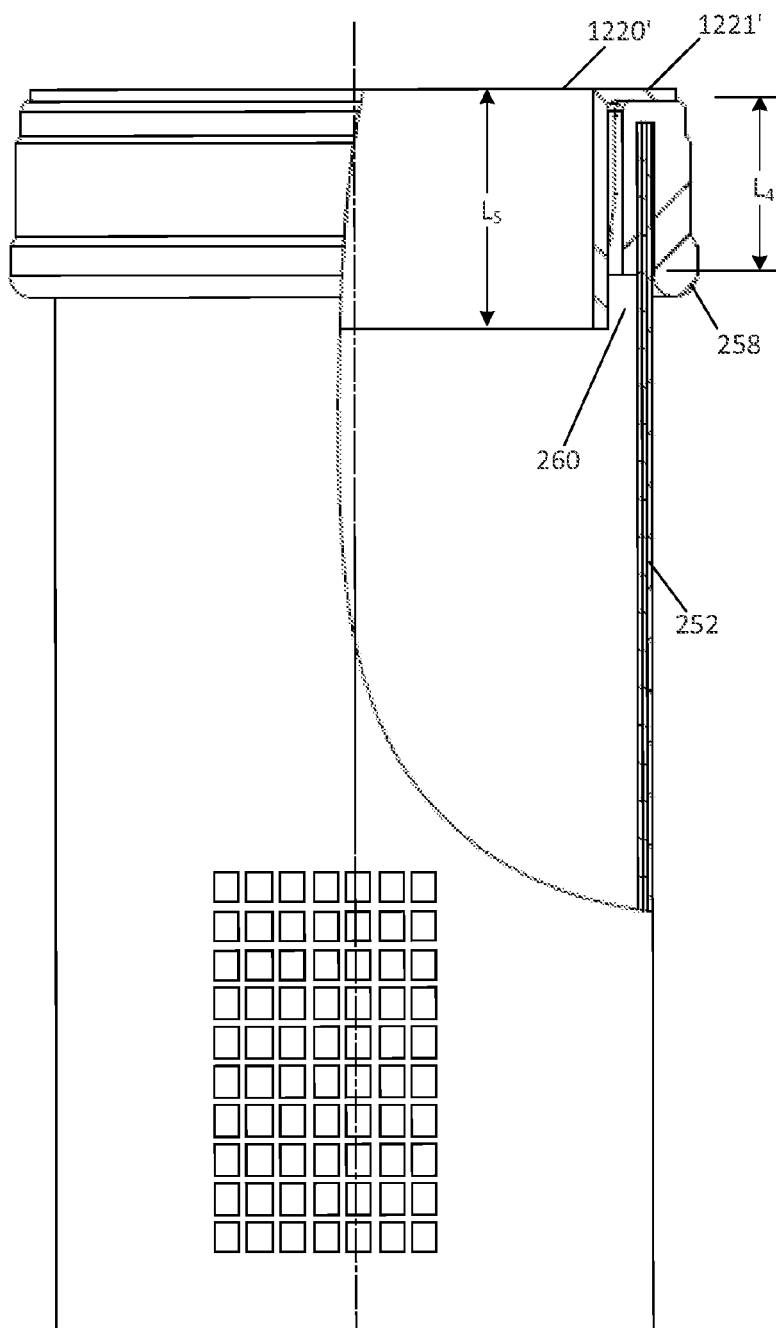


FIG. 18

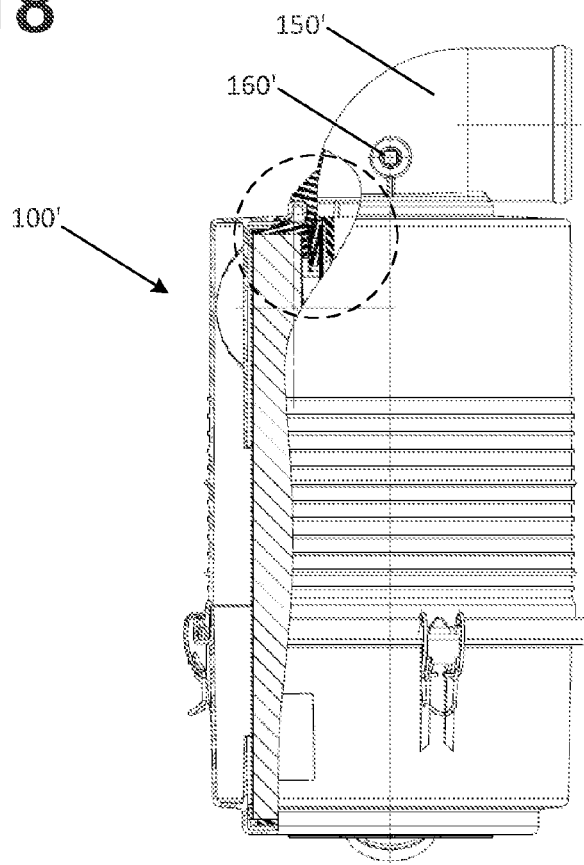


FIG. 19

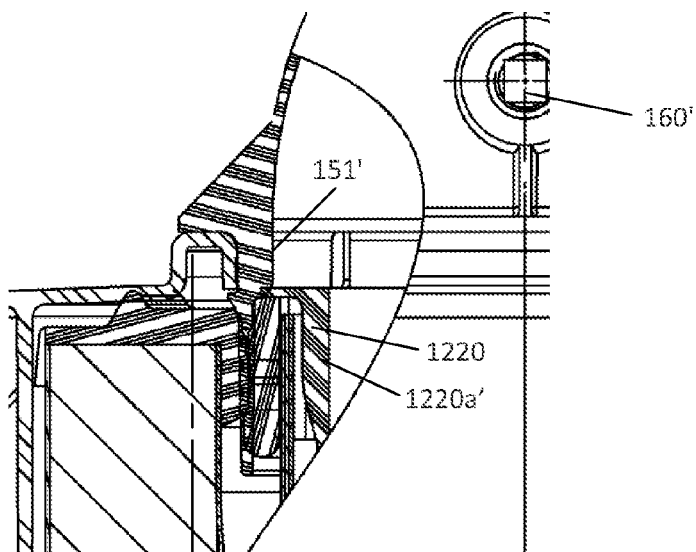


FIG. 20

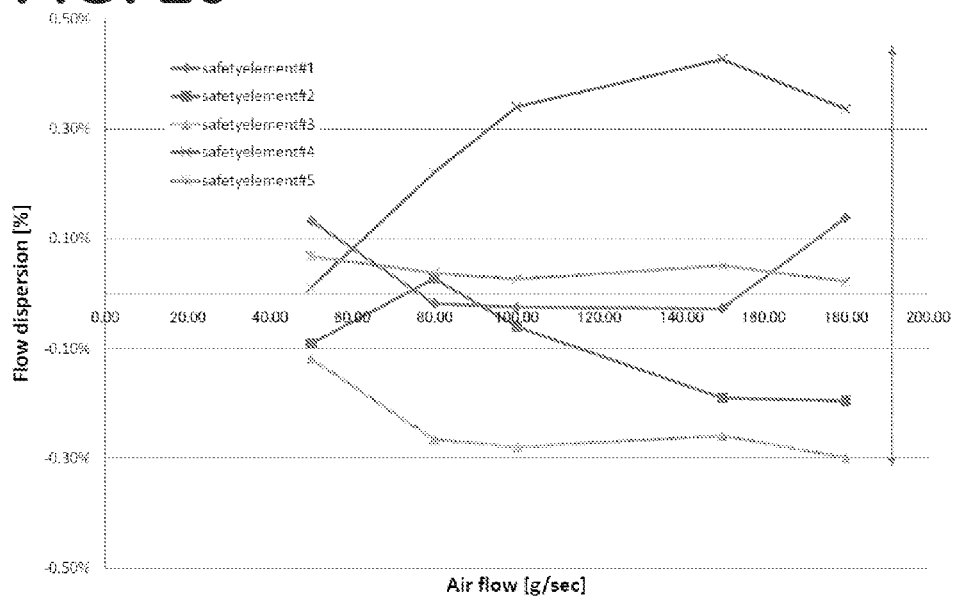


FIG. 21

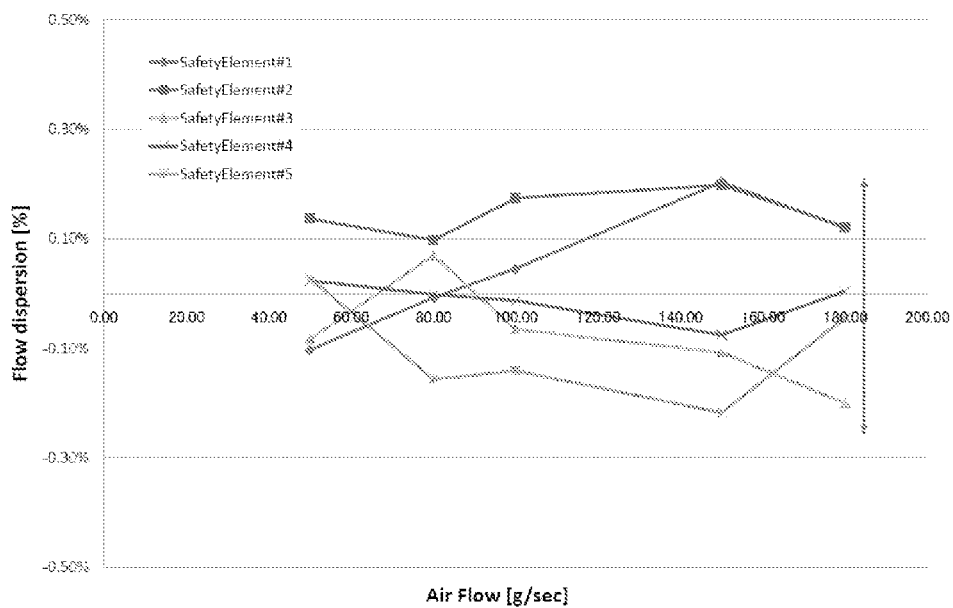
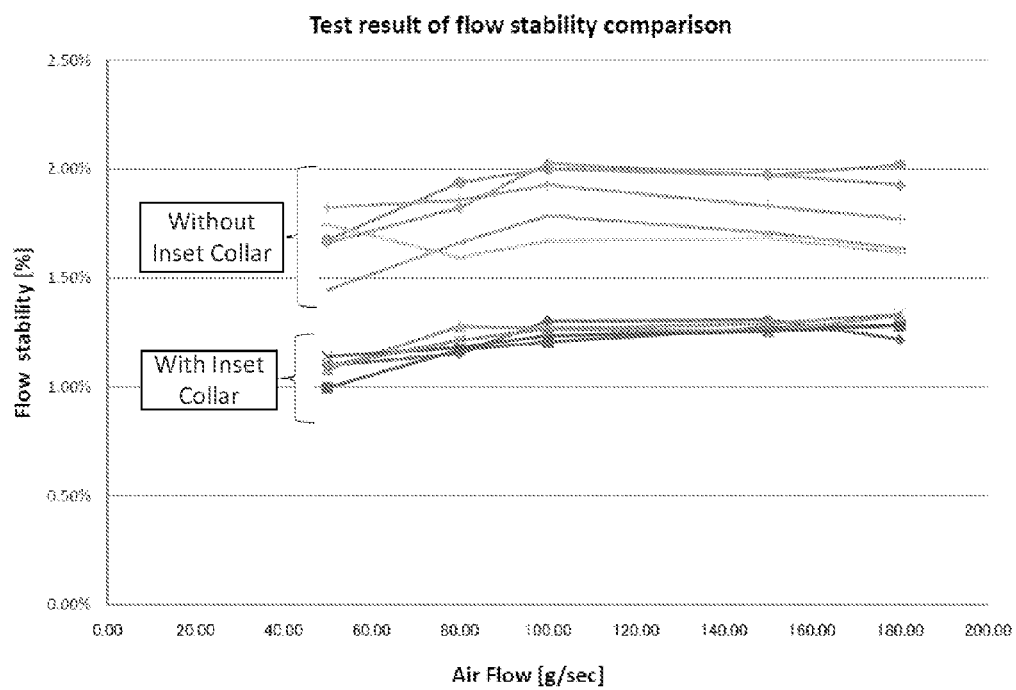


FIG. 22

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AIR FILTER ASSEMBLY

This application is being filed on 30 Apr. 2014, as a US Continuation Application of PCT International patent application No. PCT/US2012/061342, filed 22 Oct. 2012 and claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/553,407, filed on Oct. 31, 2011, 61/636,187, filed Apr. 20, 2012, 61/707,164, filed Sep. 28, 2012, and which applications are incorporated herein by reference. To the extent appropriate, a claim of priority is made to each of the above disclosed applications.

TECHNICAL FIELD

This disclosure relates to air filter assemblies suitable for use in engine air intake systems.

BACKGROUND

Air streams can carry contaminant material therein. In many instances, it is desired to filter some or all of the contaminant material from the air stream. For example, air flow streams to engines (for example combustion air) for motorized vehicles or for power generation equipment, gas streams to gas turbine systems and air streams to various combustion furnaces, carry particulate contaminant therein that should be filtered. It is preferred for such systems, that selected contaminant material be removed from (or have its level reduced in) the air. A variety of air filter arrangements have been developed for contaminant rejection. In many instances, especially where government regulations require, it is also desired to measure the mass flow rate of the filtered air that will be delivered. In some applications, it is desirable to include an air metering device within the air filter arrangement. However, other components within the filter arrangement often cause excessive turbulence thereby minimizing the accuracy of the measured airflow for such a configuration. Improvements are sought.

SUMMARY

An air filter assembly having a primary filter element, a secondary filter element, and a housing with an outlet tube is disclosed. The housing has an interior volume defined by a sidewall extending between a first end and a second end. The housing also has an air inlet opening in the sidewall and an air outlet opening in the first end. The primary filter element is operably installed within the housing and has an interior volume defined by a first wall extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap. The secondary filter element is operably installed within the primary filter element interior volume and has an interior volume defined by a first wall extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap. The open end cap of the secondary filter element defines a sealing structure having a first portion extending into the secondary filter interior volume. The outlet tube is operably connected to the housing air outlet opening and includes an inset collar being at least partially disposed within the secondary filter interior volume and extending over at least a part of the sealing structure first portion.

A safety filter element is also disclosed comprising a first wall of media extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap wherein the first wall and end caps define an interior volume. The end cap defines a sealing structure having a first portion extending into the interior

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volume. An inset collar is secured to the first portion of the sealing structure and is at least partially disposed within the interior volume.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front view of a filter assembly.

FIG. 2 is a perspective exploded view of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of a secondary filter suitable for use in the filter assembly shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of an outlet tube suitable for use in the filter assembly shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 6 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 7 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a second embodiment of a filter assembly.

FIG. 8 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a third embodiment of a filter assembly.

FIG. 9 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a fourth embodiment of a filter assembly.

FIG. 10 is an exploded perspective view of a fifth embodiment of a filter assembly.

FIG. 11 is a front view of an inset collar usable with the filter assembly shown in FIG. 10.

FIG. 12 is a cross-sectional view of the inset collar shown in FIG. 11.

FIG. 13 is a cross-sectional view of a portion of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 10.

FIG. 14 is an exploded perspective view of a sixth embodiment of a filter assembly.

FIG. 15 is a front view of an inset collar usable with the filter assembly shown in FIG. 14.

FIG. 16 is a cross-sectional view of the inset collar shown in FIG. 15.

FIG. 17 is a cross-sectional view of a portion of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 14.

FIG. 18 is a cross-sectional view of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 14 installed in a filter housing.

FIG. 19 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 18.

FIG. 20 is a schematic chart showing test results for an air filter assembly without the inset collar of the filter assembly shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 21 is a schematic chart showing test results for an air filter assembly with an inset collar.

FIG. 22 is a schematic comparison chart showing test results for an air filter assembly with and without an inset collar.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference will now be made in detail to the exemplary aspects of the present disclosure that are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like structure.

With reference to FIGS. 1-3, an air filter assembly 100 is shown. For the purposes of the description in this application, air filters are discussed, but the various embodiments described herein also relate to filtration of other gases. Air filter assembly 100 is for filtering a dirty air stream 10 to provide a clean airflow stream 20 to an end use device, for example an internal combustion engine. The primary components of the air filter assembly 100 are a housing 102 having

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an inlet **114** and an outlet tube **150**, a primary filter element **200**, and a secondary filter element **250**. Each of these aspects of the disclosure is discussed in further detail in the following paragraphs.

As can be seen in FIGS. **1** and **2** air filter assembly **100** is shown as further including an optional dust ejection valve **120**. Dust ejection valve **120** is for discharging accumulated debris within the housing **102** via a cyclone effect occurring inside the housing. In the embodiment shown, dust ejection valve **120** is a duckbill valve. One skilled in the art will appreciate that other types of valves known in the art may also be used.

With reference to FIGS. **1** and **3**, air filter assembly **100** also includes an optional metering devices **162a**, **162b**. Metering devices **162a**, **162b** can be for measuring an aspect of the clean airflow stream **20**. One example of an aspect of the clean airflow stream **20** is the velocity of the air. The metering devices **162a**, **162b** may also measure air pressure. Another example is the oxygen content of the airflow stream **20**. Yet another example of an aspect of the clean airflow stream **20** is the temperature. In the particular embodiment shown, metering device **162b** is a hot wire anemometer configured to output a pulse width modulation signal proportional to the mass air flow rate of the airflow stream **20**. Other types of metering devices are suitable for this type of measurement, such as vane meter sensors and vortex shedding sensors. One skilled in the art will appreciate that other types of metering devices known in the art may also be used.

As stated above, air filter assembly **100** includes a primary filter element **200** which can be best seen in FIGS. **2** and **3**. Primary filter element **200** is exposed to the dirty airflow stream **10** and filters the air to create clean airflow stream **20**. As shown, primary filter element includes a first wall of filter media **202** formed into the shape of a tube that extends between an open end cap **204** and an opposite closed end cap **206**. In the particular embodiment shown, the end caps **204**, **206** are molded from a resilient urethane material. The resulting media and end cap structure defines an interior volume **210**. In operation, the dirty airflow stream **10** is exposed to the exterior of the first wall of filter media **202** which passes through the first wall of filter media **202** into the interior volume **210**.

It is noted that the primary filter can be provided with or without an outer liner, and can be provided with or without an inner liner. Typically, the primary filter element **200** will comprise pleated media and no inner liner and no outer liner. The media will typically be pleated and may include corrugations extending generally perpendicularly to the pleat tips, to facilitate keeping the pleats open during use. Various pleat tip folding techniques can be used to facilitate this, as are common in the art. Examples of this can be found in media packs having the mark "Pleatloc" from Donaldson Company, Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn., the Assignee of the present disclosure.

As can be most easily seen at FIGS. **2** and **6**, the open end cap **204** defines a sealing structure **208** that encases an end of the first wall of filter media **202**. Sealing structure **208** is for providing a radial seal between the exterior of the primary filter element **200** and the interior volume **210** such that the dirty airflow stream **10** cannot bypass the filter media **202** and mix with clean airflow stream **20**. In the embodiment shown, sealing structure **208** forms a radial seal with the outlet tube **150**. Sealing structure **208** may be made from a variety of materials, such as polyurethane and rubber.

Installed within the interior volume **210** of the primary filter element **200** is the secondary filter element **250**. Secondary filter element **250** is for providing a safety function in

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the event of a failure or removal of primary filter element **200**. In this regard, secondary filter element **250** prevents direct exposure of the intake air path to the internal combustion engine to the environment when the primary filter element **200** is either damaged or removed.

In the embodiment shown, secondary filter element **250** includes a first wall of media **252** formed into the shape of a tube that extends between an open end cap **254** and an opposite closed end cap **256**. In the particular embodiment shown, the end caps **254**, **256** are molded from a resilient urethane material. This structure defines an interior volume **260** which is in uninterrupted and direct fluid communication with the outlet tube **150** of the air filter assembly. As shown, the interior volume has an internal diameter $D_{sub.3}$. The first wall of media **252** can be made from synthetic or natural materials and can be pleated or non-pleated. For example, media **252** can include pleated cellulose, pleated or flat cellulose/synthetic and spun bond materials treated with special additives. Media wall **252** can also have a single layer or multiple layers of media. The secondary filter element **250** can also be formed with an inner and/or an outer liner for increased structural strength. In the exemplary embodiment shown, media wall **252** comprises two layers of filter media and a liner.

As can be most easily seen at FIG. **4**, the open end cap **254** of secondary filter **250** defines a sealing structure **258** that encases an end of the first wall of filter media **252**. Sealing structure **258** is for providing a seal between the exterior of the secondary filter element **250** and the interior volume **260** such that air cannot bypass the filter media **252** into outlet tube **150**. Sealing structure **258** includes a first portion **258a** that extends into interior volume **260** along an interior side **252a** of the first wall of filter media **252**. In the embodiment shown, first portion **258** has a length $L_{sub.4}$ that is about 25 mm. Sealing structure **258** also includes a second portion **258b** and a third portion **258c** that extend over the end portion and an exterior side **252b** of the first wall of filter media **252**, respectively. Third portion **258c** is configured to form a radial seal against the outlet tube **150**.

As mentioned previously, air filter assembly **100** includes a housing **102**, as can be seen most easily in FIGS. **1-3**. As shown, housing **102** has a sidewall **104** extending between a first end **106** and a second end **108** that together define an internal volume **118**. It is within internal volume **118** that the primary filter element **200** and the secondary filter element **250** are installed, their closed ends being nearest the second end **108** of the housing **102**. To facilitate the installation and removal of the filters **200**, **250**, the housing **102** is constructed to have a first shell **102a** and a separable second shell **102b** that allow for access into the interior volume **118**. The first and second shells are held together by fastening means **110**. In the particular embodiment shown, the fastening means **110** is a plurality of clasps **110**. The filter assembly housing **102** is also provided with mounting band **112** for mounting the filter assembly **100** to a structure, such as a motorized vehicle.

The housing **102** further includes an air inlet opening **114** within the sidewall **104** for allowing entry of the dirty airflow stream **10**. Housing **102** also has an outlet opening **116** defined by the first end **106** to allow the clean air stream **20** to exit the interior volume **118** of the housing. The first end **106** of the housing also defines a shoulder surface **106a** and an outward projection **106b** for supporting and retaining the outlet tube **150** through which the clean airflow stream **20** is delivered. With reference to FIG. **5**, the outlet tube **150** includes a shoulder **152** and a recess **152a** which correspondingly engage shoulder surface **106a** and outward projection

106b, respectively. This structure allows for outlet tube **150** to be supported and rotatable with respect to housing **102**.

Still referencing FIG. 5, the outlet tube **150** has a first section **150a** configured for connection to the housing first end **106** and a second section **150b** configured for connection to an outlet hose (not shown). As shown, the first and second sections **150a**, **150b** are at about right angles to each other and form an elbow. Alternatively, the first and second sections **150a**, **150b** can be at other angles to each other, including being in line with each other to form a straight outlet tube **150**. In the embodiment shown, the first section **150a** and the housing **102** share a common longitudinal axis **122**, as illustrated in FIG. 1.

As shown in the drawings, the first section **150a** of outlet tube **150** has a generally constant internal diameter, D.sub.1. As used throughout this disclosure, the term “generally constant diameter” is taken to mean that the sidewall does not vary from the longitudinal axis by more than about 5 degrees. Due to manufacturing limitations for some materials, especially with plastic molding requiring at least some draft angle, it is sometimes not possible to obtain a perfectly parallel internal wall. As such, the sidewall may form a generally constant diameter, but have a slight taper. In the embodiment shown, outlet tube **150** is made from plastic and has a draft angle taper of approximately 1 degree such that the first section **150a** narrows slightly as it extends in a downstream direction towards the second section **150b**.

In the embodiment shown, the first section **150a** of outlet tube **150** includes an outer collar **154**. With reference to FIG. 6, outer collar **154** provides a first radial seal **161** against the seal structure **208** of the primary filter element **200** and a second radial seal **163** against the third portion **252c** of the sealing structure **252** of the secondary filter element **250**. As constructed, outer collar **154** operates to ensure that unfiltered air from the air flow inlet **114** cannot bypass the primary and secondary filter elements **200**, **250** to the outlet tube **150**. In the embodiment shown, outer collar **154** has a length L.sub.1 of about 30 millimeters (mm) and an average internal diameter D.sub.1 of about 90 mm.

The first section of outlet tube **150** is also shown as including an inset collar **156**. Inset collar **156** is for minimizing the airflow flow dispersion and maximizing the flow stability of the clean airflow stream **20** flowing from the secondary filter element internal volume **260** as it is introduced into outlet tube **150**. In certain configurations, a typical end cap on the secondary filter element can cause significant disruption to the airflow which in turn adversely affects the readings one might obtain from a metering device **162b**.

In certain embodiments, the inset collar **156** extends at least partially into the interior volume **260** of the secondary filter element **250**. As shown most clearly in FIG. 6, inset collar **156** extends into the interior volume **260** of the secondary filter element and over the first portion **258a** of the sealing structure **258**. Such a configuration allows for air flowing within interior volume **260** to be directed into the first section **150a** of the outlet tube **150** without passing over the first portion **258a** of the sealing structure **258** of the open end cap **250**. One benefit of this arrangement is that irregularities in the dimensions of the sealing structure **258** can be shielded from air flow and thus prevented from disrupting the air flow.

In the particular embodiment shown, the inset collar **156** has a length L.sub.2 of about 31 mm and an average internal diameter D.sub.2 of about 65 mm such that the resulting gap G.sub.1 between the inset collar **156** and the outer collar **154** is about 13 mm. In some embodiments, length L.sub.2 is greater than the gap G.sub.1. In other embodiments, length L.sub.2 is at least two times greater than the gap G.sub.1. As

shown in FIG. 6, the gap G.sub.1 allows for inset collar **156** to be separated from the first portion **258a** such that a seal is not formed between inset collar **156** and sealing structure **258**. The inset collar **156** also extends over the first portion **258a** of the seal structure **258** by an amount equal to the difference between the length of the inset collar L.sub.2 and the length of the first portion L.sub.4.

In certain embodiments, length L.sub.2 is substantially greater than length L.sub.4. In other embodiments, length L.sub.2 allows inset collar **156** to at least partially cover the seal structure first portion **258a** of the secondary element **250**. In other embodiments, length L.sub.2 is long enough for inset collar **156** to at cover a majority of the seal structure first portion **258a** along length L.sub.4. In still other embodiments, length L.sub.2 is equal to or greater than the length L.sub.4 of the seal structure first portion **258a** such that the first portion **258a** is fully covered. In certain embodiments, length L.sub.2 is at least one quarter of the inner diameter D.sub.3 of the secondary filter element **250**. In other embodiments, length L.sub.2 is at least one third the inner diameter D.sub.3 of the secondary filter element **250**.

The first section of outlet tube **150** also includes a sensor port **160a**, **160b** to accommodate the installation of the air flow metering device **162a**, **162b** or other sensing device. In the embodiment shown, port **160b** is a distance L.sub.3 above the end **156a** of the inset collar **156**. Along this length, the first portion **150a** of the outlet tube **150** has a smooth surface which allows for the clean airflow **20** to have an enhanced velocity profile leading up to metering device **162**. This configuration also results in a ratio of L.sub.3 to D.sub.1 of about 2.3 to 1 to 2.5 to 1. It is desirable for this ratio to be at least 1 to 1, and more preferable for this ratio to be at least 2 to 1. It is also desirable for the ratio of L.sub.3 to the actual diameter of the inlet tube at the sensor port **160b** (slightly less than D.sub.1 due to the draft angle) to be at least 1.1 to 1. In certain embodiments, length L.sub.2 provides at least 20% of the total length L.sub.3 from the upstream end of the inset collar **156** to the flow metering device. As noted above, the second section **150b** of outlet tube **150** is shown as being at about a right angle to the first section **150a**. Because of this configuration, the location of where the metering device **162b** can be mounted is constrained and limits length L.sub.3 to a location where the airflow is still traveling in a uniform direction before the elbow.

By utilizing an inset collar **156** in an air filter assembly **100**, as described above and shown in the drawings, a significantly improved airflow profile at the location of sensor port **160b** can be achieved, as evidenced by the test result charts provided in FIGS. 20-22. FIG. 20 shows a schematic chart showing multiple test results for an air filter assembly that is not provided with an inset collar, and thus allows for airflow to pass over the open end cap of the safety filter element prior to entering the outlet tube. As can be seen, the flow dispersion percentage for such a configuration ranges from about +0.45% to about -0.3%. In comparison, FIG. 21 represents test results for the same filter elements, but with the inset collar **156** installed, and shows that the flow dispersion percentage range is reduced to a range from about +0.2% to about -0.2%. FIG. 22 shows similar comparative results for improvements in flow stability percentage with the inset collar **156** present.

Referring to FIGS. 7-19, additional embodiments are presented. As many of the concepts and features are similar to the first embodiment shown in FIGS. 1-6, the description for the first embodiment is hereby incorporated by reference for all other embodiments, and vice versa. Where like or similar features or elements are shown, the same reference numbers

will be used where possible. The following descriptions for the additional embodiments will be limited primarily to the differences between the embodiments.

Referring to FIG. 7, an alternative embodiment of an outlet tube and inset collar is shown. As can be seen, inset collar **156'** is provided at a shorter length L.sub.2' and does not extend the full length of the first portion **258a** of the secondary filter element seal structure **258**. Also, inset collar **156'** is attached to the seal structure **258** of the secondary filter element **250**. An additional inset collar **220** having a length L.sub.5 is provided attached to the first seal structure portion **258a**. Inset collar **220** is configured to mate with the end of the inset collar **156'** at an interface location **222** to form an assembled inset collar. The inset collars **156'** and **220** can be configured to have teeth, splines or other positive registration means to ensure that they have mated together properly at interface location **222**.

Referring to FIG. 8, another alternative embodiment of an outlet tube and inset collar is shown. Similarly to the embodiment shown in FIG. 7, inset collar **156'** is provided at a shorter length L.sub.2' and does not extend the full length of the first portion **258a** of the secondary filter element seal structure **258**. An additional inset collar **220'** having a length L.sub.5 is provided and configured to mate with the end of the inset collar **156'** at an interface location **222'** to form an assembled inset collar. The inset collars **156'** and **220'** can be configured to have teeth, splines or other positive registration means to ensure that they have mated together properly at interface location **222'**. In contrast to the embodiment shown in FIG. 7, the inset collar **220'** is attached directly to the secondary filter element **250** in FIG. 8. In one embodiment, the inset collar **156'** is attached to an interior liner **250a** of filter element **250**. The interior liner **250a** of filter element **250** and inset collar **220'** can be formed from the same or different materials and can be plastic, metal, or other types of materials. In a preferred embodiment, interior liner **250a** and inset collar **220'** are both plastic.

Referring to FIG. 9 another alternative embodiment is shown wherein the inset collar is entirely defined as being attached to the first portion **258a** of the secondary filter element seal structure **258**. As shown, inset collar **220''** is attached to the first seal structure portion **258a** and has a length of L.sub.5. Inset collar **220''** is configured to mate with a portion of the outlet tube **150''** at an interface location **222''**. The inset collar **220''** and the outlet tube **150''** can be configured to have teeth, splines or other positive registration means to ensure that they have mated together properly at interface location **222''**.

Referring to FIGS. 10-14 yet another alternative embodiment is shown wherein the inset collar **1220** is entirely defined as being attached to the first portion **258a** of the secondary filter element seal structure **258**. In contrast to the aforementioned embodiments, the embodiment of FIGS. 10-14 is especially suitable for retrofit applications where the outlet tube does not extend into the interior volume of the safety filter element, such as the filter assembly **100'** shown at FIGS. 18-19. As most easily seen at FIG. 13, inset collar **1220** is attached to the first seal structure portion **258a** and has a length of L.sub.5 and an internal diameter D.sub.4. In the embodiment shown, inset collar **1220** has a length L.sub.5 of about 32.5 millimeters (mm) and an average internal diameter D.sub.4 of about 66 mm. Due to manufacturing limitations for some materials, especially with plastic molding requiring at least some draft angle, it is sometimes not possible to obtain a perfectly parallel internal wall. As such, the sidewall of the inset collar **1220** may form a generally constant diameter, but have a slight taper.

Additionally, the length L.sub.5 of the inset collar **1220**, as shown, is greater than the length L.sub.4 of the seal structure **258** by about 8 mm. The greater length of L.sub.5 is beneficial in accommodating manufacturing variances in the length L.sub.4 of the seal structure, nominally shown as being 24 mm, thereby ensuring that the seal structure first portion **258a** is entirely covered by the inset collar **1220**. As shown, the inset collar **1220** is arranged with respect to the seal structure **258** such that the inset collar **1220** extends past the seal structure first surface **258a** in an axial direction towards the closed end cap of the filter, resulting in the formation of an interior volume **260**.

This configuration provides significantly enhanced airflow characteristics for a sensor, such as a pressure sensor or a mass air flow sensor, which may be located at port **160'**, as compared to an application where the seal structure **258** is exposed to the airflow stream. It is also noted that, in contrast to the embodiments of FIGS. 1-9, inset collar **1220** interior surface **1220a** is configured to be inset from the interior sidewall **151'** of the outlet tube **150'** in a manner similar to that shown in FIGS. 18-19. However, the inset collar **1220** may alternatively be configured to mate with a portion of the outlet tube at an interface location in a manner similar to that shown in FIG. 9.

Referring to FIGS. 11-12, the inset collar **1220** is provided with a plurality of protrusions extending radially outward from the inset collar **1220**. In one embodiment, the protrusions are in the form of radially spaced tabs **1221** and ribs **1223**. The radially spaced tabs **1221** are configured to engage with the seal structure **258** such that the seal structure **258** may be molded and secured onto the inset collar **1220**. FIG. 13 shows one of the tabs **1221** embedded in the seal structure **258**. The radially spaced ribs **1223** are provided to ensure proper alignment and spacing between the filter media **252** and the inset collar **1220**. Referring to FIG. 12, it can be seen that each rib **1223** has a first portion **1223a** that is tapered to allow the filter media **252** to more easily be inserted over the inset collar **1220** and a second portion **1223b** that extends to the underside of the tab **1221**. As shown, the ribs **1223** extend a distance of about 4 mm from the interior surface **1220a** of the inset collar **1220** while the tabs extend about 8.5 mm from the interior surface **1220a**.

In the particular embodiment shown, eight tabs **1221** and eight ribs **1223** are provided at an equal spacing about the inset collar **1220**. However, fewer or more tabs **1221** and ribs **1223** may be provided depending upon the application. Additionally, although each of the tabs **1221** is shown as being aligned with the one of the ribs **1223**, an offset arrangement is also possible. It is also possible to provide an unequal number of tabs **1221** relative to the number ribs **1223**. Instead of tabs **1221**, the protrusion may be in the form of a continuous or partial ring or other shape projection, preferably with apertures for allowing the sealing structure material to flow through during the molding process.

Referring to FIGS. 15-19 another alternative embodiment is shown wherein the inset collar **1220'** is similar to that shown in FIGS. 10-14, but is configured to be removable from the seal structure **258**. As most easily seen at FIG. 15, inset collar **1220'** can be pressed into and against the first seal structure portion **258a**. As shown, inset collar **1220'** has a length of L.sub.5 and an internal diameter D.sub.4. In the embodiment shown, inset collar **1220'** has a length L.sub.5 of about 33 millimeters (mm) and an average internal diameter D.sub.4 of about 66 mm.

Additionally, the length L.sub.5 of the inset collar **1220'**, as shown, is greater than the length L.sub.4 of the seal structure **258** by about 8 mm. The greater length of L.sub.5 is beneficial

in accommodating manufacturing variances in the length L.sub.4 of the seal structure, nominally shown as being 24 mm, thereby ensuring that the seal structure first portion 258a is entirely covered by the inset collar 1220'. As shown, the inset collar 1220' is arranged with respect to the seal structure 258 such that the inset collar 1220' extends past the seal structure first surface 258a in an axial direction towards the closed end cap of the filter, resulting in the formation of an interior volume 260.

This configuration provides significantly enhanced airflow characteristics for a sensor, such as a pressure sensor or a mass air flow sensor, which may be located at port 160', as compared to an application where the seal structure 258 is exposed to the airflow stream. As can be seen at FIGS. 18-19, the interior wall 1220a' of the inset collar 1220 is configured to be inset from the interior sidewall 151' of the outlet tube 150', but may alternatively be configured to align with a portion of the outlet tube at an interface location in a manner similar to that shown in FIG. 9.

Referring to FIGS. 15-16, the inset collar 1220' is provided with a singular flange 1221' and a plurality of radially spaced ribs 1223'. It is noted that a plurality of radially spaced tabs or other such projection(s) can be used instead of the shown flange 1221'. The flange 1221' is configured to engage with the top surface 258b of the seal structure 258 such that the inset collar 1220' may be properly received into the seal structure 258. The radially spaced ribs 1223' are provided to ensure alignment between the inset collar 1220' and the seal structure 258, and to ensure that the inset collar 1220' is frictionally secured to the seal structure 258. Referring to FIG. 16, it can be seen that each rib 1223' has a first portion 1223a' that is tapered to allow the inset collar 1220' to be more easily inserted into the seal structure 258. Each rib 1223' also has a second portion 1223b' that extends to the underside of the flange 1221'. As shown, the ribs extend a distance of about 4.5 mm from the interior surface 1220a' of the inset collar 1220' while the flange extends about 12.5 mm from the interior surface 1220a'.

In the particular embodiment shown, sixteen ribs 1223' are provided at an equal spacing about the inset collar 1220'. However, fewer or ribs 1223' may be provided depending upon the application.

Various modifications and alterations of this disclosure will become apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of this disclosure, and it should be understood that the scope of this disclosure is not to be unduly limited to the illustrative embodiments set forth herein.

We claim:

1. A safety filter element comprising:

- (a) a first wall of media extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap, the first wall and end caps defining an interior volume, the open end cap defining a sealing structure having a first portion extending into the interior volume;
- (b) an internal liner adjacent to the first wall of media and within the interior volume defined by the first wall of media; and
- (c) an inset collar secured to the internal liner of the safety filter element at a location between the open and closed end caps and being entirely disposed within the interior volume adjacent to the open end cap.

2. The safety filter element of claim 1, wherein the inset collar includes registration means for positively engaging an outlet tube of an air filter assembly.

3. The safety filter element of claim 1, wherein the inset collar has a length less than a length of the first portion of the sealing structure.

4. The safety filter element of claim 1, wherein the inset collar has a length equal to or greater than a length of the first portion of the sealing structure.

5. The safety filter element of claim 1, wherein the inset collar extends into the interior volume towards the closed end cap further than the first portion of the sealing structure.

6. The safety filter element of claim 1, wherein the inset collar has a generally constant internal diameter.

7. The safety filter element of claim 1, wherein the inset collar is secured to the internal liner of the safety filter element at a location between the open and closed end caps.

8. A filter element comprising:

- (a) a first wall of media extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap, the first wall and end caps defining an interior volume having an inner diameter, the open end cap defining a sealing structure having a first portion extending axially towards the closed end cap into the interior volume a first distance; and
- (b) an inset collar disposed within the open end cap of the filter element and being at least partially disposed within the interior volume such that the inset collar extends axially towards the closed end cap a second distance that is equal to or greater than the first distance, the inset collar being permanently coupled to the open end cap, wherein the inset collar has a maximum outer diameter less than or equal to the inner diameter.

9. The filter element according to claim 8, wherein the sealing structure is molded onto the inset collar.

10. The filter element according to claim 9, wherein the sealing structure is molded onto the first wall of media.

11. The filter element according to claim 8, wherein the inset collar further comprises at least one protrusion extending radially outward from the inset collar, the at least one protrusion being configured to retain the sealing structure onto the inset collar.

12. The filter element according to claim 8, wherein the inset collar further comprises a plurality of alignment ribs radially spaced around the inset collar.

13. The filter element according to claim 8, wherein the inset collar further comprises a flange that engages with a second portion of the sealing structure facing away from the closed end cap.

14. An air filter assembly comprising:

- (a) a housing having an interior volume defined by a side-wall extending between a first end, and a second end, the housing having an air inlet opening in the sidewall and an air outlet opening in the first end;
- (b) a primary filter element operably installed within the housing interior volume, the primary filter element having an interior volume defined by a first wall extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap;
- (c) a secondary filter element operably installed within the primary filter interior volume, the secondary filter element having an interior volume defined by a first wall extending between a closed end cap and an opposite open end cap, the open end cap defining a sealing structure having a first portion extending axially towards the closed end cap into the interior volume a first distance;
- (d) an outlet tube operably connected to the housing air outlet opening; and
- (e) an inset collar disposed within and permanently attached to the open end cap of the secondary filter element and being at least partially disposed within the interior volume of the secondary filter element such that

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the inset collar extends axially towards the secondary filter element closed end cap a second distance.

15. The air filter assembly according to claim **14**, wherein the second distance is equal to or greater than the first distance.

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16. The air filter assembly according to claim **14**, wherein the inset collar extends entirely over the sealing structure first portion from a first axial end of the first portion to a second axial end of the first portion.

17. The air filter assembly according to claim **14**, wherein the inset collar has a generally constant first internal diameter.

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18. The air filter assembly according to claim **14**, further comprising a port configured to receive a sensing device.

19. The air filter assembly of any of according to claim **14**, wherein an interior surface of the inset collar is inset from an interior surface of the outlet tube.

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